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No. XXI.

CRANIOTOMY FORCEPS.

The GOLD VULCAN MEDAL of the Society was this session presented to JOHN POCOCK HOLMES, Esq., for a Craniotomy Forceps. The following communication has been received from the candidate on the subject, and the instrument has been placed in the Society's repository.

SIR,

Old Fish-street, May 26, 1826.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, announcing to me the reward which the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, &c., have been pleased to confer on me for my craniotomy forceps, on condition of my leaving a model, with a description thereof, and of my relinquishing all pretensions to a patent.

I therefore have the pleasure of sending herewith two pair of forceps (the one adapted for external, the other for internal application), and beg to say that I cheerfully relinquish all claims to a patent.

One case of the application of my instrument was witnessed by Mr. Field, and is referred to in the certificate of that gentleman which I had the honour to lay before the Society; and another subsequent case has occurred equally successful.

To enlarge on an instrument used for such delicate purposes, when every feeling heart must deplore the necessity for its use at all, would be superfluous; and, in a volume intended for the general reader, highly improper. I will therefore content myself with giving a proper reference to the plate. I shall feel honoured in rendering any assistance which may be required.

As I presume the Society will publish some of the numerous certificates which I had the honour to hand to you, from the eminent professional men and practitioners in midwifery, may I be allowed particularly to request that the certificate of Sir Astley P. Cooper, Bart. may be published, as that scientific surgeon very ably points out the application of my invention to cases of lithotomy as well as craniotomy.

I am, Sir,

A. Aikin, Esq.

Secretary, &c. &c.

&c. &c. &c.

JOHN POCOCK HOLMES.

*Reference to the figures of Mr. Holmes's Forceps.
Plate VIII.*

Fig. 1 is a view of the entire instrument; fig. 4 shows the two parts disunited: *ee* is the convex blade, perforated with holes, for the purpose of receiving the teeth when the instrument is in action: *aa* is the concave, spoon-like blade, in the hollow of which the toothed lever *b*, fig. 5, is lodged. This toothed lever works on the screwed pin or fulcrum *c*, and its unarmed end rests on the spring *d*, fig. 6. The natural action of this spring is, by raising the end that

rests on it, to depress the opposite armed end, so that the points of the teeth lie just within the margin *g g*, fig. 2, of the hollow blade; this part of the forceps may therefore be introduced separately, with scarcely more risk of injury to the patient than a plain solid blade. The other part of the forceps, namely the convex perforated blade, is next to be introduced; the two parts then are to be united, as in fig. 1, and pressure is to be made on the handles. The consequence will be, that the part *f* of the blade *ee* will bear on the unarmed end of the lever, and will depress it, by overcoming the resistance of the spring; the armed end will consequently rise above the margin of the hollow blade, as shown in fig. 3, and will thus give the practitioner a firm hold of whatever may be intercepted between the two blades of the forceps. Fig. 7 is a modification of the instrument, in which the perforated blade is the convex one, and the armed blade is the concave one.

CERTIFICATES.

April 10, 1826.

I am little a judge in such matters, but the instrument of Mr. Holmes appears to me to be safe and ingenious.

I am of opinion that it might be safely and effectually employed to break a stone in the bladder, in the operation of lithotomy.

ASTLEY COOPER.

Medical Society's House, Bolt-court,
Fleet-street, March 6, 1826.

I hereby certify, that on the 20th of September last I assisted Mr. Holmes in a case of midwifery, in which there was a disproportion between the head of the child and the pelvis, and passages through which it was to pass. Dr. Conquest's long forceps were applied, and some effect was produced; but it was found that the labour could not be terminated by that instrument, or any kind of forceps, without exerting a degree of force not justifiable under the circumstances of the case. It was therefore deemed proper to lessen the volume of the head by the perforator; this was done, and then Mr. Holmes applied the craniotomy forceps he has recently invented, and in the course of an hour the labour was effected, the instrument retaining its hold of the head of the child until it was extracted.

It may be observed, that in this case there was a want of room in the pelvis; the child was very large; and much difficulty was experienced in extracting the shoulders and body of the child. The whole of the delivery was conducted in the most cautious and deliberate manner.

JAMES FIELD, *Surgeon*.

St. Saviour's, Southwark,

May 12, 1825.

SIR,

Having seen a pair of your craniotomy forceps, I can feel no hesitation in stating, that I think that in judicious hands they are likely to prove a very useful instrument.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

J. P. Holmes, *Esq.*

JAMES BLUNDELL.

Broad-street-buildings,

March 30, 1826.

I have been shown a pair of craniotomy forceps, invented by Mr. Holmes, and think them very appropriate to the purpose of extracting a dead child through a pelvis which is much deformed ; at the same time the instrument displays considerable ingenuity.

JOHN RAMSBOTHAM.

Broad-street-buildings,

March 29, 1826.

I think Mr. Holmes's craniotomy forceps, while they display much ingenuity, are calculated to afford the operator great power in his attempts to extract a perforated head through a deformed pelvis.

FRANCIS H. RAMSBOTHAM, M. D.

29, Conduit-street, March 28, 1826.

I have examined a pair of craniotomy forceps of Mr. Holmes, and they appear to me to be admirably contrived ; and that their application, in cases where they are required, will very much facilitate the operation of extracting the foetus.

HENRY DAVIES, M. D.

*Physician to the British Lying-in
Hospital.*

34, Brook-street, Grosvenor-square,
March 29, 1826.

I have examined a new craniotomy instrument, invented by Mr. Holmes, and think it possesses great ingenuity. It appears to be a perfectly safe instrument, and will enable the operator to exert great force in the extraction of the head through a distorted pelvis.

SAMUEL MERRIMAN, M. D.

Saville-row, March 29.

The instrument which has been shown to me by Mr. Holmes seems well calculated to bring the head of a dead child through the pelvis.

CHARLES M. CLARK.